

JOSE MARIA BRAGA DESERVES A TRIBUTE

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The Government has just erected a bust to the memory of Luís Gonzaga Gomes. I think that it is a good thing. But I think that it is a bad thing that other figures who have made Macau known throughout the world might be forgotten. I am referring to Montalto de Jesus and to José Maria Braga. It was Braga who continued Montalto, projecting the image of Macau far and wide with his books in English.

Of the teachers whom I met in St Joseph's Seminary when I arrived here in 1924, the sole survivor is José Maria Braga, then a teacher of English.

His predecessor was a Mr Ezra who was absenting himself from the lessons two out of three times without saying anything to anyone.

The Vice-Rector, Father João Machado de Lima, contacted Jack Braga on 14-1-1924, and the latter made himself available to give lessons.

On the 30th of that month he was appointed interim teacher by the new Rector, Father Francisco Bonito Bragança, and on February 2nd he became the actual teacher, since Ezra absented himself from Macau, abandoning the service.

Braga went on to teach the Commercial Course of English, revealing himself to be an excellent teacher and educating hundreds of youths who were employed in commercial firms of the Far East - Macau, Hong Kong, Canton, Shanghai, Bangkok, Yokohama, Tokyo, etc.

Beyond the teaching body, Braga dedicated himself to journalism, founding and directing several magazines and journals, as well as writing for the periodicals of Hong Kong and Shanghai, always with much brilliance and proficiency.

But what brought him most fame were his historical works. Beyond innumerable articles in the magazines of Macau, Hong Kong and Shanghai, he published several works which are avidly sought after today, but which, unhappily, are found to be long out of print. I cite the principal ones: Tombstones in the English Cemetery at Macau, 1940; A Voz do Passado, Redescoberta de A Collecção de Vários Factos acontecidos nesta mui Nobre Cidade de Macau [The Voice of the Past, Rediscovery of "The Collection of Several Events which have taken place in this most Noble City of Macau"], 1964; Tamão dos pioneiros

Portugueses [Tamão of the Portuguese Pioneers], 1939;
O Primeiro acordo luso-chinês por Leonel de Sousa em 1554
[The First Luso-Chinese Accord by Leonel de Sousa in 1554],
 1939.

Western pioneers and their discovery of Macau. This excellent
work was translated into French with the title: Les Pioniers
de l'Occident et la découverte de Macau. Traduit de l'anglais
par Maurice Echinard. Saigon.

With the Flowery Banner. Some comments of the Americans in
Macao and South China, 1940.

The Beginnings of printing at Macao, 1963. This work was
translated into Portuguese with the title: Primórdios da
Imprensa em Macau, 1965.

China Landfall - 1513. Jorge Alvares voyage to China.

A compilation of some relevant material, 1955. [Note: though
printed in a separate paragraph, this may be a subtitle and
date for the previous item. - KS].

Hong Kong and Macao. A record of good fellowship, 1960.

Jesuítas na Ásia [Jesuits in Asia]. It has 516 pages and
contains the partial index of the vast collection of
documents in the Ajuda Library, with valuable annotations by
the author. This work, which should have had more than
1000 pages, remained incomplete, and it is difficult today to
come across any copy, beyond that which I hold.

A Seller of "Sing-Songs": A Chapter in the Foreign Trade of
China and Macao, 1961.

In collaboration with C R Boxer, he published A Embaixada de
Manuel Saldanha à China e Tartária (1667-1670) [The Embassy
of Manuel Saldanha to China and Tartary (1667-1670)].

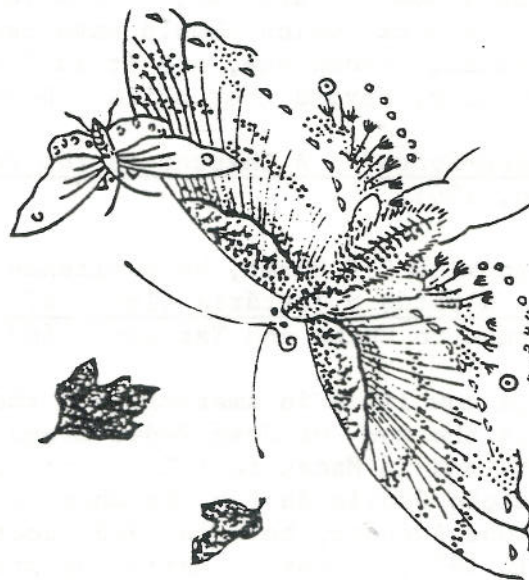
José Maria Braga now lives in America with the fine age of 87 years; he is the son of José Pedro Braga and Olive Pauline Pallard, and in Macau in 1924 he married Augusta Isabel da Conceição Osório da Luz, by whom he had seven children: Carlone Augusta, born in 1926, doctor; Teresa Antónia, born in 1927, doctor; Maria Augusta, born in 1929; Angela Teresa, born in 1930, nurse; António Maria, born in 1931, doctor; José António, born in 1932, public servant; and Pedro António, born in 1934, electrotechnic engineer.

Jack Braga had a very rich library; some books were acquired by the Biblioteca Pública de Macau [Public Library of Macaul]; but the main body of the library was bought by the National Library of Australia, Canberra, for a good price.

We gained nothing and I regret immensely that such a work may remain incomplete.

That Library, which already had the Indian, Japanese, Chinese sections, etc., with employees from those various nations, then opened the Portuguese section, appointing Braga as Librarian of his own books with a high salary.

I visited him there in 1970 and he was my guide. I insisted then on what I had already asked of him so many times: to complete his valuable work Jesuítas na Ásia, of which he had only published half.



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